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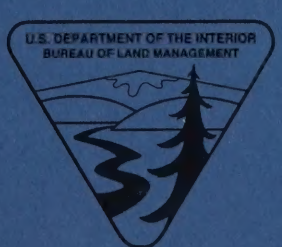
November 1993



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EVALUATION OF THE PILOT PROJECT FOR REMOTE DATA ENTRY OF FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Executive Summary — Tab
- Summary Recommendations — Tab
- Evaluation — Tab

I. Background — Page 1

II. Results and Accomplishments — Page 1

III. Recommendations — Page 5

IV. Bureauwide Implementation Plan Summary — Page 10

- Appendix A: Idaho Evaluation — Tab
- Appendix B: Wyoming Evaluation — Tab
- Appendix C: Statistics — Tab
- Appendix D: Bureauwide Implementation Plan — Tab

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EVALUATION OF THE PILOT PROJECT FOR REMOTE DATA ENTRY OF FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The pilot project for remote data entry of financial transactions began in October, 1992 and was completed in October, 1993. BLM organizations involved in the pilot project were the Service Center (SC), Division of Finance and the State and District Offices in Idaho and Wyoming.

Pilot Project Scope:

- Entering commitments, miscellaneous obligations, travel obligations, and cost adjustments at remote locations.
- Making state-specific financial transaction files available to each state for local analysis.
- Providing research capability to the states by making available certain on-line FFS tables.

Pilot Project Objectives:

- To enhance fund control and provide accurate budget execution information to Bureau managers in a more timely manner.
- To eliminate or reduce field office maintenance of auxiliary systems (cuff records).
- To evaluate the impact of remote data entry on field office resources.

Pilot Project Results:

- Improved fund control was realized throughout the year as well as year end. Both states were within cost targets at year end.
- Accurate and timely information resulted in elimination of the necessity for Idaho and Wyoming to maintain cuff records.
- Once proficient with the process, there was little or no additional impact on field office resources. Time required for remote data entry was essentially offset with the elimination of cuff records. However, there was a shift in who or where work was being performed. With this process, better information is available with less management effort.
- Overall results would indicate that Bureauwide implementation would afford considerable benefits to the Bureau in improved management of resources.

EVALUATION OF THE PILOT PROJECT FOR REMOTE DATA ENTRY OF FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1. Approve Bureauwide phased implementation of remote data entry of financial transactions.

Recommendation 2. Delegate to each State Director the responsibility for determining remote data entry sites where financial transactions will be entered as well as state-specific implementation strategies.

Recommendation 3. Brief the Deputy State Directors for Administration and the Budget Officers from all states on the results of the remote data entry pilot project.

Recommendation 4. Provide the participating states a transaction detail file with query and/or download capability.

Recommendation 5. Increase the scope of the Bureauwide remote data entry project to include receiving documents and travel advances. Increase the balanced voucher limit from $10,000 to $20,000.

Recommendation 6. Provide for future evaluation of temporary duty travel payments, non-government vendor payments, bills, and collections for migration to field office data entry.

Recommendation 7. Phase in implementation of remote data entry on a Bureauwide basis. Begin with Arizona and the Phoenix Training Center. Consider potential for conversion of one additional state in FY 1994. Develop implementation schedule for FY 1995.

Recommendation 8. Use training materials and documented procedures developed during the pilot project for Bureauwide implementation.

Recommendation 9. Utilize key personnel from the Idaho and Wyoming State Offices to assist the SC, Division of Finance in implementing remote data entry Bureauwide.

Recommendation 10. Conduct two training sessions in each new state, initial training and follow-up training.

Recommendation 11. Utilize security profiles established for the remote data entry pilot project during Bureauwide implementation.

Recommendation 12. Provide training and on-line inquiry access to FFS project related tables.

EVALUATION OF THE PILOT PROJECT FOR REMOTE DATA ENTRY OF FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS

I. BACKGROUND

Implementation of the Federal Financial System (FFS) within the Bureau has provided Bureau management the opportunity to address several long outstanding issues.

- Availability of current and accurate budget execution information.
- Elimination of the 30-45 day financial data lag time caused by monthly cycle updates and documents in transit.
- Compliance with Departmental commitment accounting guidelines.
- Elimination of cuff records.
- Correction of several Office of the Inspector General audit findings.

To address these issues, a pilot project for remote data entry of financial transactions was undertaken during Fiscal Year 1993 by the Service Center (SC), Idaho, and Wyoming.

II. RESULTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Written evaluations of the pilot project were prepared by the Idaho and Wyoming State Offices. In addition, the SC conducted telephone interview evaluations with each District Office in both states and then summarized the interview results by state. The detailed evaluations for Idaho are contained in Appendix A. The evaluations for Wyoming are contained in Appendix B. The following summarizes these pilot project results and accomplishments.

Remote Data Entry Strategy:

Common Strategies:

- The pilot project included three major aspects which allowed the states participating in the test to enter accounting transactions as they occurred and obtain up-to-date financial status information. These aspects were on-line data entry, on-line research capability, and download of financial transactions.

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- On-line data entry included the entry of requisitions, miscellaneous obligations, travel obligations, and balanced vouchers (cost adjustments) into FFS.

- Each state downloaded FFS transaction data to their local Personal Computers (PC) for data analysis. This data was current as of the previous day.

- Both states established necessary telecommunications.

- Both states, in concert with the SC, established necessary security access to FFS.

- Both states obligated all transactions except motor vehicles, household moves, and Office of Aircraft Services.

Idaho Specific Strategies:

- A designated person in the State Office was the liaison who coordinated all matters with the District Offices and the SC.

- All procurement transactions were obligated but were not always entered into FFS as a commitment before recording the obligation, i.e., all procurements were not committed depending on the dollar threshold and procurement lag times.

- The State Office, all six District Offices and one detached Resource Area Office participated in the pilot, with a total of 21 individuals performing data entry on a part-time basis.

- In the State Office, commitments and travel obligations were entered by division personnel. Miscellaneous obligations and balanced vouchers were entered by the Budget Staff.

- In the District Offices, one person entered requisitions and miscellaneous obligations, and another person entered travel obligations.

- Procurement staffs were involved in data entry at the District Office level but not at the State Office level.

Wyoming Specific Strategies:

- The Budget Staff served as a team liaison between the State Office and the SC as well as the Wyoming District Offices.

- One State Office data entry coordinator entered all State Office documents. Each District Office had two data entry coordinators to enter all documents for their respective district. This resulted in a total of 9 individuals performing data entry on a part-time basis.

- All procurement transactions, regardless of dollar threshold and procurement lag time, were initially entered as a commitment. These commitments were then referenced (liquidated) when the transaction became a bona fide obligation.

Benefits:

Improved Communications:

- Significant improvements in communications were realized between the State Offices and the SC, between the State Offices and their respective District Offices, and between District Offices and the SC. As a result, the entire financial process was strengthened.

Improved Procedures:

- Standardized and simplified procedures for processing transactions were developed resulting in streamlined financial processes and improved budget execution.

- Pilot office on-line inquiry capability to research Treasury check issue dates for both vendors and employees resulted in enhanced employee morale and improved relationships with local vendors. In addition, significant savings were realized by eliminating numerous telephone inquiries between field offices and the SC.

Fund Control:

- Remote data entry facilitated timely and accurate data by eliminating the in-transit time lag associated with a centralized finance office. With the system being updated daily from remote locations and both on-line and downloaded data available, financial data and reports were current, meaningful, and available to management at any time throughout the month.

- System currency and on-line inquiry capabilities provided optimum budget execution and management of resources.

Elimination of Cuff Records:

- Before remote data entry, some level of cuff records were maintained in both states in order to manage budget

- One State office data entry coordinator entered all State office documents. Each District Office had two data entry coordinators to enter all documents for their respective district. This resulted in a total of 9 individuals performing data entry on a part-time basis.

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Elimination of Cost Records:

- Before remote data entry, some level of cost records were maintained in both states in order to manage budget

execution. When cuff records did not coincide with balances in the official accounting system decisions were sometimes made without reliable data.

- The accurate and timely information emanating from remote data entry resulted in cuff records being substantially eliminated in both pilot states.

Budget-Related Management Decisions:

- Up-to-date and accurate budgetary information resulted in better program planning and managerial decisions.

Fiscal Year End:

- The access to current financial data simplified the annual close. Through FFS on-line inquiries, the pilot offices knew the status of all documents. In prior years, offices did not have current fund availability because of the lack of information regarding in-transit documents or what had actually been processed by the SC.

Training:

- Formal training sessions were conducted by the SC at each State Office prior to pilot remote data entry implementation. Training materials and procedure manuals were provided by the SC.

- Follow-up training in each Wyoming District was provided by the SC after the first quarter. Periodic conference calls were held in which all offices participated. In Idaho, follow-up training was conducted by the SC at the State Office site. The Idaho State Office also conducted follow-up and new employee training in selected districts.

- Extensive assistance from the SC and both State Offices was provided to pilot participants by telephone.

Impact on Field Office Resources:

- Once proficient with the process, there was little or no additional impact on field office resources. Time required for remote data entry was essentially offset with the elimination of cuff records. However, there was a shift in who or where work was being performed. With this process, better information was available with less management effort.

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Impact on SC Resources:

- Impact on SC, Division of Finance resources was rather substantial at the onset due to requirements associated with developing training materials, developing procedures manuals, presentation of training, and other functional support requirements. Having completed the developmental aspects of remote data entry, future impacts should be somewhat reduced.

- SC impacts associated with reduced data entry requirements were not significant for just two states. Benefits in this area will be derived from Bureauwide implementation. Appendix C contains statistics designed to add perspective to potential workload shifts associated with remote data entry.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

The pilot project for remote data entry of certain financial transactions offered significant benefits to the two pilot states.

- Remote data entry eliminated the lag time for documents in transit. This provided the capability for true currency of the financial system.

- Remote data entry, coupled with the state-specific download of financial data to PCs, provided the information and flexibility needed for day-to-day management decisions without maintenance of auxiliary systems (cuff records).

- The additional benefit of on-line inquiry of the FFS tables, particularly at year end, enabled both of the pilot states to manage their resources in a responsible manner, thus remaining within the cost targets established for those states.

Idaho and Wyoming will continue remote data entry of financial transactions during Fiscal Year (FY) 1994. Based on the significant benefits realized during the pilot project, specific recommendations relative to Bureauwide implementation are addressed in detail below.

Recommendation 1.

- Approve Bureauwide phased implementation of remote data entry of financial transactions (including commitments), with implementation beginning in FY 1994.

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Recommendation 1.

- Approve Statewide phased implementation of remote data entry of financial transactions (including commitments), with implementation beginning in FY 1994.

Recommendation 2.

- Delegate to each State Director the responsibility for determining the remote data entry sites where financial transactions will be entered.
  - This recommendation is based on results of the pilot project where Idaho and Wyoming took different approaches to implementation, both of which were equally successful.
- Make each State's Budget Office responsible for statewide coordination of the implementation of remote data entry and the subsequent oversight thereof.
- Make the SC, Division of Finance responsible for training, system administration, and functional support.
- Make the SC, Division of Computer Maintenance, Operation, and Support Services responsible for providing technical telecommunications support.

Recommendation 3.

- Brief the Deputy State Directors (DSDs) for Administration and the Budget Officers from all states to provide information on the results of the pilot project and to begin developing a framework for states to assess their own implementation strategies.
  - The briefing will be conducted by the SC, Division of Finance and the DSDs for Administration and Budget Officers of Idaho and Wyoming.

Recommendation 4.

- Provide the participating states a transaction detail file which will be updated on a daily basis. This file will reside on the Honeywell or other BLM platform.
- Provide states the opportunity to query this file or to download their state-specific financial data into software of their choice and utilize the data for management purposes as they deem appropriate.

Recommendation 5.

- Increase the scope of the Bureauwide remote data entry project to include not only the documents tested during the pilot project, but also additional transactions which are logical to the document chain.

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Recommendation 5.

- Increase the scope of the Bureauwide remote data entry project to include not only the documents tested during the pilot project, but also additional transactions which are logical to the document chain.

- This would provide near-term resolution for some long outstanding problems, such as prompt payment interest, property reconciliation, correction of audit findings, etc.

- The following identifies the documents included in the pilot project and the additional documents which are being recommended for remote data entry.

  - **Documents Included in the Pilot Project:**

    -- Requisition Document (RQ) - records commitments (administrative reservation of funds) in accordance with the Joint Financial Management Improvement Program (JFMIP) "CORE financial systems requirements" and related policy guidance and standards of the Office of Management and Budget, the General Accounting Office, and the Department of the Treasury.

       --- It is recommended that the dollar threshold for commitments coincide with Departmental policy requiring commitment of funds for procurements of $25,000 and greater on the upper limit, and that commitment of funds below that limit be left to the discretion of the respective State Offices.

    -- Obligation Document (MO) - records miscellaneous obligations other than travel.

    -- Travel Order Document (TF or TO) - records temporary duty travel obligations.

    -- Balanced Voucher Document (BV) - records cost adjustments. For the pilot project, balanced voucher documents of $10,000 or less were entered and approved at the field office level. Documents greater than $10,000 required SC entry.

  - **Additional Documents Recommended for Bureauwide Implementation:**

    -- Receiving Document (RC) - records receipts of goods (accruals). Inclusion of this document will solve several issues including correction of audit findings, reduction of prompt pay interest by eliminating the time lag for documents to be mailed from field locations to the SC, and enhanced property reconciliation capabilities.

-- Travel Advance Document (TD or TO) - records travel advances. Inclusion of this document will reduce the time required for employee receipt of travel advances. This concept coupled with the implementation of Automated Clearing House (ACH) electronic fund transfers for non-government vendors and employees (scheduled for partial implementation in FY 1994) would enable a traveler to receive a travel advance deposited to his/her bank account within three days of data input.

--- Written procedures addressing adherence to established travel authorization policy, establishment of internal controls and audit (review) processes, and control of document flows will be in place before migrating this function to field offices.

-- Balanced Voucher Document (BV) - reclassifies cost coding of a previously processed document. It is recommended that entry and approval by field offices be raised from $10,000 to $20,000. Both of these limits are based on judgement. There is no analytical basis for either limit. Procedures for cost reclassification will require reference to a specific previously processed document.

- Allow Idaho and Wyoming to begin entering travel advance documents and receiving documents upon approval of these recommendations and completion of additional procedures. Procedures and field office training materials have already been partially developed by the SC to accommodate the additional documents.

Recommendation 6.

- Consider additional documents for remote data entry in the future. These documents are recommended for future evaluation and implementation because of the internal control issues associated with migration of these functions to field offices and because of the considerable training applicable to their decentralization.

- **Additional Documents Recommended for Future Evaluation and Potential Bureauwide Remote Data Entry:**

-- Travel Voucher Documents (TV) - records temporary duty travel voucher payments. This would expedite payment of travel vouchers.

-- Travel Advance Document (TD or TD) - records travel advances. Inclusion of this document will reduce the time required for employee receipt of travel advances. This concept coupled with the implementation of Automated Clearing House (ACH) electronic fund transfers for non-government vendors and employees (scheduled for partial implementation in FY 1994) would enable a traveler to receive a travel advance deposited to his/her bank account within three days of data input.

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* Allow Idaho and Wyoming to begin entering travel advance documents and receiving documents upon approval of these recommendations and completion of additional procedures. Procedures and field office training materials have already been partially developed by the SC to accommodate the additional documents.

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* Consider additional documents for remote data entry in the future. These documents are recommended for future evaluation and implementation because of the internal control issues associated with migration of these functions to field offices and because of the considerable training applicable to their decentralization.

- Additional Documents Recommended for Future Evaluation and Potential Bureauwide Remote Data Entry:

-- Travel Voucher Documents (TV) - records temporary duty travel voucher payments. This would expedite payment of travel vouchers.

-- Payment Voucher Documents (PV) - records non-government payments. Remote data entry of payments should greatly reduce interest payments under the Prompt Pay Act.

-- Billing Documents (BD) - records accounts receivable.

-- Collection Documents (CR) - records cash receipts.

Recommendation 7.

- Phase in implementation of remote data entry of financial transactions on a Bureauwide basis.

- Implement remote data entry in Arizona and the Phoenix Training Center in January or February 1994. Once Arizona and the Training Center have been trained and SC assistance to those organizations has been stabilized, additional State(s) would be phased in at approximate six-month intervals.

  - Arizona and the Training Center were selected as the initial Bureauwide implementation locations based on their interest in the project. Toward the end of FY 1994 one additional state may be converted based on need and desire.

- Implement remote data entry during FY 1995 based on a predetermined schedule approved by the Assistant Director, Management Services.

Recommendation 8.

- Use training materials and documented procedures developed during the pilot project for Bureauwide implementation.

Recommendation 9.

- Utilize key personnel from the Idaho and Wyoming State Offices to provide assistance to the SC, Division of Finance in implementing remote data entry of financial transactions on a Bureauwide basis.

  - This will include assisting the SC in both initial and follow-up training for other states.

  - It will also include sharing information and providing assistance in the development and/or implementation of automated local analysis tools

-- Payment Voucher Documents (PVD) - records non-government payments. Reduce data entry of payments should greatly reduce interest payments under the Prompt Pay Act.

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- Utilize key personnel from the Idaho and Wyoming State Offices to provide assistance to the SC, Division of Finance in implementing remote data entry of financial transactions on a Bureauwide basis.

  - This will include assisting the SC in both initial and follow-up training for other states.

  - It will also include sharing information and providing assistance in the development and/or implementation of automated local analysis tools

such as those currently used by the two pilot states to format downloaded financial data available from the SC.

Recommendation 10.

- Conduct two training sessions in each new state, with an initial training session for remote data entry and a follow up session after the field office employees have had an opportunity to perform remote data entry.

  - Training will be evaluated by individuals attending the training sessions and modifications/improvements made to the training based on the evaluation feedback.

Recommendation 11.

- Utilize security profiles established for the remote data entry pilot project during Bureauwide implementation. In general, these security profiles allow:

  - Access to only the FFS documents approved for remote data entry.

  - On-line inquiry access to the FFS tables updated by these documents as well as payment voucher related tables.

  - On-line inquiry access to two budget execution tables which show cost target and spending data at two different levels.

  - On-line inquiry access to the Vendor Table (VEND) for employees who enter travel related documents and look-up access to the BLM custom zero table (VNDR) for employees who enter non-travel related documents. The VNDR table is the same as the VEND table but does not display sensitive data such as social security number or banking information.

Recommendation 12.

- Provide training and on-line inquiry access to project related tables. This will resolve a long outstanding issue related to currency of project information.

IV. BUREAUWIDE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Appendix D contains a detailed Bureauwide implementation plan. Issues covered in the plan are listed below.

- Documents scheduled for remote data entry
- General policy
  - Security
  - Training
  - Local analysis capability
  - State-specific implementation
  - Implementation strategy
  - Source documents
  - Reports
  - Internal controls
- Processing procedures for field entry transactions
- Delineation of responsibilities

EVALUATION OF THE PILOT PROJECT
FOR REMOTE DATA ENTRY
OF FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS

APPENDIX A

I. IDAHO STATE OFFICE EVALUATION

Pilot Implementation:

- Idaho brought all data entry personnel and their supervisors to the State Office in October for training by SC, Division of Finance personnel. Then in February they returned for a refresher course on data entry and to go over the procedures that had been written on the different kinds of transactions they were processing. Beyond these two training sessions we had a lot of one-on-one telephone conversations to answer questions as they came up. In Idaho we had a few turnovers in personnel. We chose not to have formal training but instead trained the new people by phone and one-on-one. The state data entry coordinator also traveled and visited some of the District Offices that requested special assistance. There was a lot of positive feed back on this effort.

- We set up some procedures in the State Office on how to handle the paper flow of the documents that were being entered into FFS. We made the decision that all requisitions in the State Office would be entered. The districts, on the other hand, were given the flexibility to not enter all requisitions if they chose not to do so. They were told that if it was not time efficient to enter a requisition, they could enter only the obligation.

Results and Accomplishments:

- Remote data entry has given field budget personnel a better working relationship with the SC, Finance Office. This process has improved communications between the SC and the field. As a result of developing procedures and having to ask each other questions the two groups have developed a very good working relationship.

- A **major** benefit of this pilot is the establishment of standardized, simplified procedures. Before we started, many of the procedures were used just because "that's the way it has always been done." Some things were even done according to how a person felt that day. The new procedures have been very helpful in training and in day-to-day operations at all levels in the process.

- Remote data entry has given us a better understanding of fund control.

- Along with remote data entry, the two pilot states were given the ability to retrieve daily transaction files for data analysis purposes. That information was placed in a dBase III program for report generation and analysis. This provided us with timely and accurate data. It also gave us the ability to eliminate cuff records. The two pilot states were also given on-line inquiry capabilities to see up to the minute how they were doing on their budget. The data analysis information was verified with the monthly reports to make sure it was accurate. This worked very well and was received exceptionally well by the Idaho field offices.

- Because of remote data entry, we were able to manage our cost targets efficiently and make quality management decisions. We were able to have most of our funds obligated before year end so that year-end spending was kept at a minimum. Before WO adjustments, we were within $8,000 of our $23,000,000 MLR budget. With the access that was given to us, we were able to project our labor expenditures and make the proper adjustments.

- Remote data entry has given us valuable insights on how FFS works and how it ties to PRMS. It helped us know why we had been doing things in the past (like line numbers) and why the SC wanted the tools it needed for BVs. It also gave us a better understanding of fund codes (010, 245, etc...). While working on FFS, we gained knowledge of how the software works and why it does what it does.

- Field personnel were pleased with the control they had over their funds. People, who were skeptical at first, are now very supportive mainly due to the added control they experienced. At year end we were able to do BVs in the State Office for Idaho. It is great to know when your documents get changed instead of just hoping they might.

- The access we had made it easier to close the books. We were able to look at tables and see where we stood. Also, with remote data entry, we knew what was and was not entered. In prior years, we did not know where we stood because we did not know what was in the pipeline to the SC.

- The on-line inquiry tables were very useful. We were able to do most of our own research without bothering the SC staff. The capability to do corrections was invaluable, too. We were able to correct a mistake or

change a charge code on an obligation without going through the SC staff. It was great!

- The impact on field resources was minimal and the benefits outweighed any of the impacts. In the beginning, a few adjustments had to be made and some managers wondered if it would be worth the effort. By the time it was over and the dust had settled, an overwhelming majority did not want to go back to the old way. Remote data entry is an invaluable tool. If all offices would use this tool, the Bureau would not have to do year-end adjustments prior to closing like they have in the past.

- Idaho appointed a single manager of the remote data entry project. Data entry for commitments and travel obligations in the State Office was spread among divisions. The obligations were entered by Budget. Districts involved procurement personnel in data entry, but the State Office did not. In FY 1994 State Office data entry of commitments and travel will be centralized in Budget because the funds have been centralized there. Procurement personnel will enter obligations. The process in the districts will not change.

- The SC worked diligently to create and provide new reports as we requested. They created a requisition report and an aged unliquidated obligation report. Not only did the SC create the reports and perfect them, they also made them available electronically so we could receive them quickly and have sorting capabilities. These reports helped us tremendously in tracking and staying within budget.

II. TELEPHONE INTERVIEW EVALUATION BY IDAHO DISTRICTS

Background: All six of the Idaho District Offices were contacted by telephone during the week of October 25, 1993 to discuss their evaluation of the remote data entry project. The Cottonwood Resource Area was also contacted.

Summary of Interviews:

Cuff Records:

- All offices felt that remote data entry eliminated the need for cuff records.

  - Several did mentioned that they need labor charges in a more timely manner. This relates to pulling data from the Personnel Cost Database which resides

change a charge code on an obligation without going through the SC staff. It was great!

- The impact on field resources was minimal and the benefits outweighed any of the impacts. In the beginning, a few adjustments had to be made and some managers wondered if it would be worth the effort. By the time it was over and the dust had settled, an overwhelming majority did not want to go back to the old way. Remote data entry is an invaluable tool. If all offices would use this tool, the Bureau would not have to do year-end adjustments prior to closing. Time they have in the past.

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Summary of Interviews:

Cost Recorded:

- All offices felt that remote data entry eliminated the need for cost recorded.

- Several did mentioned that they need labor charges in a more timely manner. This relates to pulling data from the Personnel Cost Database which resides

on the Honeywell down to the Idaho local analysis tool (IDA).

- One office felt they could eliminate cuff records on virtually everything except Range Improvement (Subactivity 8100) as they see no other way to support their charges to 8100 and respond to questions in this regard. This office mentioned that if districts had the ability to establish projects in Subactivity 8100 that this would resolve the problem. They have been unsuccessful in getting authorization to establish projects for Range Improvement costs.

- Another office experienced some problems with items not always getting properly referenced (liquidated). They also experienced some problems with duplicate travel obligations in that sometimes they entered the obligation and so did the SC. They also had some problems with imprest fund obligations but feel once these types of minor problems are resolved that all cuff records will be eliminated.

- Most offices expressed the disadvantage of not having the IDA tool for the whole year (implementation was completed at mid-year) but recognized that now that IDA is working well and we are going into a new year, they do not anticipate this to be a problem in the future. All indicated they liked the concepts of IDA and liked the abilities to use IDA for research and confirmation of financial data.

- Most offices are very enthused about the on-line research afforded by certain FFS Tables. One individual remarked that the use of the Obligation Line Table (OBLL) was very valuable but that she was unaware of this capability until quite late in the year and had some frustrations prior to knowing that this table existed and how to use it. The individual suggested this be made clear in the district procedures for the future.

Comparison of Procedures and Time Spent:

- The general consensus was that during the learning stage, remote entry consumes a lot of time, however, once they are beyond the learning curve, the time spent on remote entry is not that significant. Some offices stated that it was a minor amount of time, once proficient and trained on the process. Only one office felt that remote entry was an additional task with no "trade-off" for the time spent on remote entry. Many felt that the time for remote entry was either offset or "more than offset" by the savings they have either experienced or anticipate to

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experience with the elimination of cuff records, research as to the status of obligations, payments, etc.

- Most offices were very enthused about the remote data entry concept and stated that they feel they have much more control over their data than they ever have had in the past.

Timeliness and Accuracy of Data:

- There was unanimous enthusiasm regarding the timeliness and accuracy of data. Very positive feedback was received from everyone with comments such as "A 100% improvement over the past"; "Wonderful concepts"; "Much, Much Better"; "Great", etc. Not one office had any reservation about the significant improvements with regard to timeliness and accuracy of their financial data and all were appreciative of having better control over their data.

Fiscal Year-End Closing:

- There was an equal amount of enthusiasm and user satisfaction with the fiscal year end closing as there was with the discussion regarding timeliness and accuracy of data. Offices felt the additional time they were afforded to enter or modify obligations at year end provided them with the opportunity to get everything obligated and nearly everything obligated for an exact actual amount, rather than an "educated guess" amount. This contributed to their feelings that the financial data is much more accurate under the remote entry concept.

- Some offices obligated utilities early but were able to modify the utility obligation to an actual bill amount prior to closing.

- Very few suggested improvements to fiscal year end closing were received.

  - One was to simplify the year end memo by removing anything and everything that is not pertinent if using remote entry, such as references to faxing of obligation documents.

  - Another suggestion was that the cut off date for payment of travel vouchers was too early and if that could be extended for several days, it would be much better.

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- Another office had strong feelings that the status of projects, especially reimbursable projects, was a concern and if the SC could provide the field offices with on-line inquiry access to projects (especially reimbursable and trust) that this would make the fiscal year end closing process even more advantageous to them.

Communications between Field Offices and SC:

- Most offices felt there were significant improvements in communications with the SC and recognize the benefits of learning more about what is involved with the SC, Payments Branch functions.

- There were also compliments offered with regard to how helpful the SC finance personnel were in assisting with problem solving and answering questions.

Effectiveness of Procedures Developed for the Pilot Project:

- There was "mixed" feedback from the districts on this discussion. Some districts felt that the procedures were very good while others felt that additional work was needed on procedures. The following specific suggestions were received during discussion of this issue:

  - Procedures for modifications to obligations could be expanded and improved upon (i.e., MOs and TFs).

  - Show more examples in the remote data entry procedures such as following a document from start to finish. This would include the start up screen, the header screen, and then the line screen. Include narrative for each screen. Also explain how and when to use the various screens.

Costs Commensurate with Benefits:

- Most offices feel that the benefits of remote data entry far exceed cost. They feel that less time is spent on remote data entry than on maintaining cuff records.

  - Some of the benefits they are most enthused about include the control of inputting their own data and it's inherent timeliness and accuracy, the elimination of certain follow-up requirements with the SC on status of items, the ability to do research on-line, better control of their costs at fiscal year end, and better control of funds.

- One office stated how pleased their program managers were to have access to IDA reports and to look at them any time during the month with current data reflected.

Summary Comments:

Several sub-topics were discussed in this area. Comments are addressed below:

- Should a dollar threshold be established for recording commitments?

  - With the exception of one office, all individuals who responded to this question felt that a dollar threshold should <u>not</u> be set. Several stated that if everything they want to commit is not recorded, there is a fear that cuff records will come back into play and that the accuracy of fund status will be impeded.

  - One office felt there should be a threshold of perhaps $250 - $500 and felt commitments below this amount need not be entered.

- What other types of transactions should be considered for remote entry?

  - Suggestions were received to include the following items:

    -- Collection documents were suggested by several offices.

    -- Billing documents were suggested by one office.

    -- Refunds of grazing fee collections or performance bonds.

    -- WCF stores issues were suggested to reduce time lags they now experience which delays accuracy of their reports.

    -- Updates to Motor Vehicle Fleet System for motor vehicle costs.

    -- Non-PCS Travel Vouchers and possibly Travel Advances. Most offices did not see a big problem with the present procedures for travel advances. Some mentioned that with Diners Club (or it's replacement) the need for advances is not that great.

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-- A couple of offices indicated they would like to input anything we could get authority for them to input. Several mentioned how much they like the PCOR and PADJ input they are allowed to do and were very grateful that they could enter BVs.

-- One office had very strong feelings that the SC change the current practice that precludes the field from entering charges to another organization code, such as to the State Office or the Training Center.

- Should field office cost targets be reduced by commitments?

  - Unanimous, yes.

- How helpful are the access tools such as inquiry screens and down-loaded data?

  - All offices expressed great satisfaction with on-line inquiry screens. All offices also liked IDA and it's outputs. One office commented that with on-line FFS inquiry screens many phone calls to the SC have been eliminated.

- Should all offices (both state and district) have access to and authority to enter documents?

  - Unanimous, yes. The Resource Area indicating this should also be extended to other Resource Area Offices.

- Are there any telecommunications issues which need to be modified or enhanced?

  - None were reported. Once office indicated that speed could be improved, that downloading is sometimes slow but they were not aware of the cause of this slowness.

- Security Issues?

  - Other than the early-on security problems there was a general feeling of satisfaction with security. The one exception was an individual who strongly suggested that users not be "kicked off" the system after three tries. She would like to have more than three tries.

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- Another office asked for security to look at project screens to check on status of their projects. They felt this would be very beneficial to the field and greatly reduce phone calls to the SC.

- Any comments, suggestions for more improvement?

  - Only one office had a response to this which was for better manuals. All others indicated any suggestions were already covered elsewhere in the interview.

- Evaluation of commitment accounting, output products, on-line access, etc.?

  - Several offices were very complimentary of the aging reports and indicated how helpful they were in managing their funds, especially the aged Unliquidated Obligation Report.

  - One office said their only complaint deals with project related reports.

  - Several offices suggested we get labor costs to them more timely.

  - One office said that the PG reports (PG110, 115 and 120) are needed earlier, especially the PG115.

- Overall, offices were very complimentary and expressed their satisfaction with the remote data entry. They feel that better control of funds and other improvements they have already seen from this effort are enormous. They favor continuance of this process and recommend a Bureauwide implementation.

- The level of satisfaction and the enthusiasm expressed by the districts was very rewarding. Each of them were thanked for participating in the evaluation, as well as their participation in the pilot effort. A few mentioned that initially there was lots of resistance, frustrations and dislike of the project, but once some of the bugs were worked out and once they became more proficient in data entry, that they really liked it.

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EVALUATION OF THE PILOT PROJECT
FOR REMOTE DATA ENTRY
OF FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS

APPENDIX B

I. WYOMING STATE OFFICE EVALUATION

Pilot Implementation:

- Implementation procedures went very well in Wyoming overall. We have one data-entry person in the State Office that enters all documents for the entire State Office. In each District Office, the budget analyst does the data entry with one person as back-up. One office is trying a new technique this year of breaking up the data entry between employees, one doing travel, one doing procurement documents.

- Training was conducted by the SC, Division of Finance at the Wyoming State Office (WSO). The training was very good. The hands-on practice helped give us a good start. Training in a group gave us a chance to hear everyone's ideas and questions.

- Follow-up training in each District Office was given after the first quarter and periodic conference calls were held in which all offices participated. Continuous updates to procedures were provided by the State Office and the SC.

- Help was always available and given in a friendly, helpful manner. The pilot could not have gone this smoothly without this continuous support.

- It would be beneficial to have an abbreviated version of training now to clarify, further understand, and solidify what we have experienced this year.

- As the pilot progressed we realized we had a lot of internal procedures that had been in place just because we had been doing them throughout the years. All of these procedures were re-addressed and changed if necessary to make things more efficient.

- Procedures that were established for the data entry employees in conjunction with the SC are very valuable. The SC and state employees worked together to write these procedures in the most logical and up-to-date manner. Without these procedures, the pilot would probably not have been such a success.

Results and Accomplishments:

- Relationships between the WSO, Budget/Administrative staff and the SC were strengthened significantly. At the beginning of the pilot there was some apprehension by all involved. SC employees and Wyoming employees were unaware of the "ground rules" as far as who could do what and why. Once all of this was communicated and worked out, everyone realized that we were on the same "team", so to speak, and working relationships became very positive. Employees at both offices began identifying ways that procedures could be improved and communicating ideas. It became a very positive experience. Many things were changed at both offices that had been done for years just because it had always been done that way.

- Communications also improved between the WSO budget staff and the district budget staffs. Some of the same experiences referenced above took place. Procedures were changed within the state and within offices once communications were opened up. Ways of doing business were updated and streamlined. The state began having a common goal regarding the budget process.

- As mentioned above, as time progressed in the pilot, procedures were changed at both the state level and the SC level once employees realized the problem and communication lines were opened. Numerous procedures were changed including travel procedures at both the state and SC levels, imprest fund procedures at the state level, obligation procedures at the state and SC levels, procurement and contracting procedures at the state level, and many more too numerous to mention.

- For this first time since I have been a budget analyst in BLM, I felt that we had some control over our destiny as far as fund utilization is concerned. We were able to plan our dollars in the same manner as in the past, but this fiscal year we were able to monitor them with much greater accuracy and reliability.

- Prior to remote entry in Wyoming, all offices were keeping numerous cuff records in order to balance their budgets. This was mainly due to the lack of knowledge as to "what's in the pipeline?" Since remote data entry, all but a couple of our offices have completely relied on the FFS reports for their monitoring and tracking. Two of the four districts are keeping cuff records for the Resource Area level expenditures. This is due to the fact that the state does not plan at the Resource Area level.

- Better program planning and managerial decisions were utilized because of more up-to-date and accurate budgetary information.

- All budget analysts and data-entry employees learned more about FFS throughout the year. As the year progressed everyone became more confident and utilized the system with confidence. A greater respect for the system was realized as people became more familiar with it.

- Because of the reliability of the more current and accurate data, fund control was much more reliable.

- Year-End close was interesting this year as it put us into a new environment that actually gave us the capability of managing and controlling our destiny as far as end-of-year available balances. The only mistake we made was not "cutting off" purchasing in our districts by a certain date. Because we didn't give them a cut-off date, they were buying items up until the end of the year, not allowing us enough time to make changes if necessary.

- Local inquiry capabilities were improved greatly with the ability to access the Treasury check issue dates for both vendors and employees that travel. This is a nice benefit that helps employee morale and provides good relationships with local vendors.

  - Additionally, the same feature held true regarding the ability to look at documents to verify coding.

- New techniques were tried throughout the year. This usually resulted in procedures being changed and updated.

- Some new commitment/obligation reports were produced by the SC for the state. These were utilized to track unliquidated commitments and obligations. The reports were utilized to cancel commitments and obligations in a more timely manner.

- There are some unresolved issues yet that need to be clarified. Of these are OAS documents, airline tickets, and delayed billing of vehicle charges.

II. TELEPHONE INTERVIEW EVALUATION BY WYOMING DISTRICTS

Background: All four of the Wyoming District Offices were contacted to determine the effectiveness of the remote data entry pilot project. The same questions were asked of each district. The following summary depicts the comments of all respondents.

- Better program planning and managerial decisions were utilized because of more up-to-date and accurate budgetary information.

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Summary of Interviews:

Cuff Records:

- Each district responded that virtually all of the cuff records previously kept for budgetary management have been eliminated by the districts.
  - The cuff records maintained are mostly due to the fixed cost accounts each district maintains. This problem has been resolved for FY 1994 as new organizations have been added to track these costs for each district.
  - Other cuff records include those for "delayed billing" types of transactions such as GSA and stores. The Resource Area Offices continue to keep some cuff records partially out of habit and partially to tract their portion of the budget. These issues are being followed up by the District Offices.
  - One District broke down the reduction of cuff records in the following manner:
    - -- 60% - eliminated during fiscal year 1993.
    - -- 20% - fixed cost accounts; will be eliminated in fiscal year 1994.
    - -- 20% - delayed billing and further breakdown of budget tracking; will be followed up by District Offices to ensure elimination.

Comparison of Procedures and Time Spent:

- As a comparison, most districts responded that the new remote data entry process took the same amount of time as the old process of maintaining cuff records. The benefit from the new process included more involvement on the part of districts to manage the financial and budgetary side more accurately.
- The previous process of cleaning up the BEAN System (an automated cuff system) was very timely. The data was typically unmanageable and very difficult to reconcile. As a result, many of the Districts reconciled as close as they could and "just gave up".
- The new process is accurate and timely. It allows for more meaningful data as well as giving the districts the responsibility and authority to make corrections to the

data if necessary. This alleviates frequent calls to the SC, Payments Branch to make the required modifications.

- One district mentioned that time delays are local issues involving their Procurement Office and a lack of internal cooperation. This issue is being resolved internally.

- Another district mentioned that they found it more efficient to split the data entry and research responsibilities among others within the district. For example, the person in charge of travel was responsible to enter the travel obligations and perform the required research to answer questions from travelers.

Timeliness and Accuracy of Data:

- The overwhelming response to this issue was that the remote data entry pilot test provided much more accurate data in a more timely fashion. Two of the districts mentioned that the program leads were able to use the reports from FFS and the State Office to track requisitions and determine if any were missing from FFS.

- The accuracy of the data input into FFS is magnified due to the fact that the office entering the data is responsible for modifying incorrect data. As a result, fewer calls are made to the SC, Payments Branch to request these changes. This creates more of a sense of complete responsibility (ownership) by the field office users which is very effective in building a more responsive environment.

Fiscal Year-End Closing:

- Fiscal year-end provided the best feedback from the District Offices with regards to positive results. All District Offices mentioned that they felt that the new process cost less than the previous process of faxing source documents to the Payments Branch. The Procurement and Purchasing Agents could spend more time at their regular duties than spending time faxing these documents.

- By entering these documents into FFS, the districts felt more involved and responsible for the results of the fiscal year-end process. Each district made good use of the additional time provided at the end of the year to be more complete and accurate in their role of financial and budgetary management.

- Two suggestions were made here to improve the process. First, the two year-end memos were confusing. The references to non-remote data entry pilot states were

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confusing. Second, labor is still difficult to estimate at the end of the year which makes the management of the process less accurate.

Communication between Field Offices and SC:

- Phone calls made to the SC were handled very professionally and accurately. The Payments Branch employees were very responsive and seemed to take the time needed to answer questions and provide assistance. One district mentioned that the newly perceived availability of the Payments Branch has persuaded others from the District Offices to call where before the pilot test they would not.

- Overall, all districts feel that they have a better understanding of the procedures at the SC, Payments Branch. They also feel that the Payments Branch has a better understanding of their procedures and responsibilities. This mutual understanding improves communications.

- One district mentioned that there was a problem initially with the Payments Branch not returning phone calls but for the most part this problem has been corrected.

Effectiveness of Procedures Developed for the Pilot Project:

- The overall response to this question was that the procedures were very useful. The District Offices have used them for refreshing themselves on certain procedures and training others in the office.

- Initially the procedures were somewhat difficult to understand since the whole concept was new to the field offices. But in a short time they became clear and reasonable to follow.

- Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) procedures are difficult to implement due to the confusion at the beginning of the year with whether the Payments Branch wanted the districts to obligate the expenses. Also, for each BPA turned in to the Payments Branch, the vendor receives several checks at different times depending on prompt pay. This causes confusion with the vendors.

Costs commensurate with Benefits:

- Every district felt that the benefits of remote data entry outweighed the costs. The following were the benefits and costs mentioned:

continuing. Second, labor is still difficult to estimate at the end of the year which makes the management of the process less accurate.

Communication between Field Offices and SC:

- Phone calls made to the SC were handled very professionally and accurately. The Payments Branch employees were very responsive and seemed to take the time needed to answer questions and provide assistance. One district mentioned that the newly perceived availability of the Payments Branch has persuaded others from the District Offices to call where before the pilot test they would not.

- Overall, all districts feel that they have a better understanding of the procedures at the SC, Payments Branch. They also feel that the Payments Branch has a better understanding of their procedures and responsibilities. This mutual understanding improves communications.

- One district mentioned that there was a problem initially with the Payments Branch not returning phone calls but for the most part this problem has been corrected.

Effectiveness of Procedures Developed for the Pilot Projects:

- The overall response to this question was that the procedures were very useful. The District Offices have used them for refreshing themselves on certain procedures and training others in the office.

- Initially the procedures were somewhat difficult to understand since the whole concept was new to the field offices. But in a short time they became clear and reasonable to follow.

- Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) procedures are difficult to implement due to the confusion as the beginning of the year with whether the Payments Branch wanted the districts to obligate the expenses. Also, for each BPA turned in to the Payments Branch, the vendor receives several checks at different times depending on prompt pay. This causes confusion with the vendors.

Costs commensurate with Benefits:

- Every district felt that the benefits of remote data entry outweighed the costs. The following were the benefits and costs mentioned:

- Benefits:
  - -- Better management of financial and budgetary responsibilities.
  - -- Quicker and more efficient inquiry capability.
  - -- More accurate custom reports.
  - -- Less "clean up" time required at year-end.
  - -- More timely information.
  - -- Better communication among Districts and with SC.
  - -- Quicker obligation of funds.
  - -- Less time required for input and research.
- Costs:
  - -- Training program leads to read and understand reports.
  - -- On-line learning curve for users.

Dollar Threshold Set for RQ Documents (Commitments):

- All but one District Office felt that there should be no dollar threshold put on entering requisition documents into FFS. These offices felt that this would lead to using cuff records again and would reduce the effectiveness of remote data entry.
- One District Office felt the dollar threshold was a good idea and recommended a level between $250 and $300.

Other Types of Documents to be Considered for Remote Data Entry:

- All District Offices wanted to enter more obligations into FFS. For example, SF-182's, 3rd party drafts, SF-1164's, etc.
- These Districts also felt that allowing District Offices to enter balanced voucher documents would be beneficial.
  - Currently the State Offices participating in remote data entry are entering the BV documents.

- Benefits:
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  - -- Quicker and more efficient inquiry capability.
  - -- More accurate custom reports.
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  - -- More timely information.
  - -- Better communication among districts and with SC.
  - -- Quicker obligation of funds.
  - -- Less time required for input and research.
- Costs:
  - -- Training program leads to read and understand reports.
  - -- On-line learning curve for users.

Dollar Threshold Set for Eg Documents (Comments):

- All but one district office felt that there should be no dollar threshold put on entering requisition documents into FFS. These offices felt that this would lead to using cuff records again and would reduce the effectiveness of remote data entry.
- One district office felt the dollar threshold was a good idea and recommended a level between $250 and $300.

Other Types of Documents to be Considered for Remote Data Entry:

- All district offices wanted to enter more obligations into FFS. For example, SF-1034's, 3rd party drafts SF-1164's, etc.
- These districts also felt that allowing district offices to enter balanced voucher documents would be beneficial.
- Currently the State Offices participating in remote data entry are entering the SV documents.

- Also mentioned were all types of payments especially travel related which they feel take longer than necessary. Travel advances were mentioned as it would lead to faster advance payments to the traveler and a reduction in the use of imprest funds for these advances.

Cost Target Reduction by RQ Documents (Commitments):

- Without reservation, each District Office felt that the cost targets should be reduced by the entry of requisitions (commitments).

Research Tools for Inquiry Purposes:

- All districts felt that the nightly downloaded data from FFS to the State Office provided the most useful and accurate information. The comments also included a desire to see the data updated more often.

- The various reports developed by the SC have been very useful to the districts. The download access of these reports has given the District Offices more flexibility in the sorting and displaying the data.

Input of FFS Documents by Both State and District Offices:

- An overwhelming YES. Resource Areas would also benefit from entering this data into FFS.

Telecommunications:

- There have been no substantial delays or problems with the telecommunications at the districts since the first quarter of FY 1993.

Security Issues:

- There have been no problems with security since the beginning of the remote data entry implementation.

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- There have been no substantial delays or problems with the telecommunications at the districts since the first quarter of FY 1993.

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- There have been no problems with security since the beginning of the remote data entry implementation.

EVALUATION OF THE PILOT PROJECT FOR REMOTE DATA ENTRY OF FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS

APPENDIX C

STATISTICS: The following statistics are presented to add insight and perspective to potential workload impacts on field offices associated with remote data entry.

- There are approximately 40 different documents (transaction codes) in FFS. Seven of these are being recommended for remote data entry in FY 1994.

- None of the transactions recommended for remote data entry in FY 1994 require audit.

- During FY 1993, the total number of document lines entered into FFS was 4,190,505.

- Of the total document lines entered, 3,381,610 or 81% were entered programmatically through interfaces such as Payroll, GABS, ALMS, Motor Vehicle, Stores, etc.

- 808,895 document lines or 19% of the total were entered manually in FY 1993.

- The FY 1993 distribution of document lines for the three locations entering documents was:

Location	Number of Document Lines
Idaho	17,819
Wyoming	18,399
Service Center	772,677
Total	808,895

- If remote data entry had been implemented Bureauwide in FY 1993, field offices would have entered approximately 181,721 document lines or 22% of all manually entered document lines. This number includes travel advances and receiving documents.

- The document/line ratio of manually entered documents is 1:2.1. Therefore, the 181,721 document lines translate to approximately 86,534 documents under consideration for remote data entry.

- The following distribution of manual entry document lines by state is provided to add perspective to state-specific impacts.

  - The distribution includes travel advances and receiving documents which were not entered remotely in FY 1993.

  - The Idaho and Wyoming numbers include requisitions (commitments). Therefore the numbers for the pilot states will be proportionately higher than the other states.

Location	Number of Document Lines
Alaska	12,297
Arizona	9,398
Bureauwide	5,025
California	15,718
Colorado	8,718
Eastern States	3,211
Fire Center	5,611
Idaho	23,447
Montana	7,168
New Mexico	9,311
Nevada	11,331
Oregon	24,668
Service Center	5,731
Training Center	3,076
Utah	8,637
Washington Office	5,541
Wyoming	22,833
Total	181,721

EVALUATION OF THE PILOT PROJECT FOR REMOTE DATA ENTRY OF FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS

APPENDIX D

BUREAUWIDE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Office of the Secretary, Office of Financial Management (PFM) requires Interior Bureaus utilizing the Federal Financial System (FFS) to submit a field data entry plan for PFM approval prior to embarking on remote entry activities. A plan for the pilot project was submitted and approved in November, 1992. Once Bureauwide implementation of remote data entry is approved, an updated field data entry plan encompassing Bureauwide implementation issues must also be approved by PFM. The SC, Division of Finance is pursuing the necessary approvals.

Based on the recommendations contained in Section III. of this document, the following Bureauwide implementation plan has been drafted.

Introduction

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has completed a one year pilot project to test remote data entry of certain financial transactions in two field offices, Idaho and Wyoming. The purpose of this test was:

- To evaluate the impact of remote entry on Bureau resources.
- To provide more timely budget execution information to Bureau managers.
- To determine the Bureau's ability to eliminate or reduce field office needs for auxiliary systems (cuff records) based on the availability of more timely information by eliminating the time lag for documents in transit.
- To test and refine both remote data entry training materials and detailed written procedures associated with migration of data entry functions to field offices.

The pilot project for remote data entry offered significant benefits to the two pilot states. Remote entry eliminated the lag time for documents in transit and thus provided the capability for true currency of the financial system. This, coupled with the state-specific download of financial data to personal computers, afforded the management information and flexibility needed for day-to-day management decisions without

maintenance of auxiliary systems (cuff records). The additional benefit of on-line inquiry of the FFS tables, particularly at year-end, enabled both of the pilot states to manage their resources in a responsible manner thus remaining within the cost targets established for those states.

Scope of Remote Data Entry

Based on pilot project results, the following documents have been recommended for Bureauwide remote entry implementation beginning in Fiscal Year (FY) 1994.

- Requisition Document (RQ) - records commitments (administrative reservation of funds) in accordance with the Joint Financial Management Improvement Program (JFMIP) "CORE financial systems requirements" and related policy guidance and standards of the Office of Management and Budget, the General Accounting Office, and the Department of the Treasury.

  - The dollar threshold for commitments will coincide with Departmental guidance requiring commitment of funds for procurements of $25,000 and greater on the upper limit. Commitment of funds below that limit will be left to the discretion of the respective states.

- Obligation Document (MO) - records miscellaneous obligations other than travel.

- Receiving Document (RC) - records receipts of goods (accruals). Inclusion of this document will resolve several issues including correction of audit findings, reduction of prompt pay interest by eliminating the time lag for documents to be mailed from field locations to the SC, and enhanced property reconciliation capabilities.

- Travel Order Document (TF or TO) - records travel obligations.

- Travel Advance Document (TD or TO) - records travel advances. Inclusion of this document will reduce the time required for employee receipt of travel advances. This concept coupled with the implementation of Automated Clearing House (ACH) electronic fund transfers for non-government vendors and employees (scheduled for partial implementation in FY 1994) would enable a traveler to receive a travel advance deposited to his/her bank account within three days of data input.

maintenance of auxiliary systems (golf records). The additional benefit of on-line inquiry of the records, particularly at year-end, enabled both of the pilot states to manage their resources in a responsible manner thus remaining within the cost targets established for those areas.

Status of Remote Data Entry

Based on pilot project results, the following documents have been recommended for Bureauwide remote entry implementation beginning in fiscal year (FY) 1994:

- Requisition Document (RQ) - records commitments (administrative reservation of funds) in accordance with the Joint Financial Management Improvement Program (JFMIP) "Core financial system requirements" and related policy guidance and standards of the Office of Management and Budget, the General Accounting Office, and the Department of the Treasury.

  The dollar threshold for commitments will originate with Department guidance requiring commitment of funds for procurements of $25,000 and greater on the upper limit. Commitment of funds below that limit will be left to the discretion of the respective states.

- Obligation Document (MO) - records miscellaneous obligations other than travel.

- Receiving Document (RCI) - records receipts of goods (accruals). Inclusion of this document will resolve several issues including correction of audit findings, reduction of prompt pay interest by eliminating the time lag for documents to be mailed from field locations to the SO, and enhanced property reconciliation capabilities.

- Travel Order Document (TO or TOJ) - records travel obligations.

- Travel Advance Document (TD or TDJ) - records travel advances. Inclusion of this document will reduce the time required for employee receipt of travel advances. This concept coupled with the implementation of Automated Clearing House (ACH) electronic fund transfers for non-government vendors and employees (scheduled for partial implementation in FY 1994) would enable a traveler to receive a travel advance deposited to his/her bank account within three days of data input.

- Written procedures addressing adherence to established travel authorization policy, establishment of internal controls and audit (review) processes, and control of document flows will be in place prior to migrating this function to field offices.

Additional documents have been recommended for future evaluation and potential Bureauwide remote entry implementation. The documents are not being implemented at this time because of the internal control issues associated with migration of these functions to field offices and because of the considerable training applicable to their decentralization. Documents slated for future evaluation include the following:

- Travel Voucher Documents (TV) - records temporary duty travel voucher payments. This would expedite payment of travel vouchers.
- Payment Voucher Documents (PV) - records non-government payments. Remote entry of payments should greatly reduce interest payments under the Prompt Pay Act.
- Billing Documents (BD) - records accounts receivable.
- Collection Documents (CR) - records cash receipts.

General Policy

Security: Security profiles established for the remote data entry pilot project will be utilized during the Bureauwide implementation. In general, these security profiles allow:

- Update access to BLMs custom Program Management System (PRMS) tables.
- Update access to the PCOR and PADJ tables for payroll corrections and adjustments.
- Access to only the FFS documents approved for Bureauwide remote data entry implementation, i.e., RQ, MO, RC, BV, and TO including the advance portion of the document and the TO clones TD and TF.
- Scan access to the FFS tables which these documents update as well as payment voucher related tables.
- Scan access to two budget execution tables which show cost target and spending data at two different levels (ALOT and SALT).

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established travel authorization policy.
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with migration of these functions to field offices and because
of the considerable training applicable to their
decentralization. Documents slated for future evaluation
include the following:

- Travel Voucher Documents (TV) - records temporary duty travel voucher payments. This would expedite payment of travel vouchers.

- Payment Tracking Documents (PY) - records non-government payments. Remote entry of payments should greatly reduce interest payments under the Prompt Pay Act.

- Billing Documents (BD) - records accounts receivable.

- Collection Documents (CX) - records cash receipts.

General Policy

Security: Security profiles established for the remote data entry pilot project will be utilized during the Bureauwide implementation. In general, these security profiles allow:

- Update access to BLKS (Batch Program Management System) (PRMS) tables.

- Update access to the PCCR and PADJ tables for payroll corrections and adjustments.

- Access to only the PTS documents approved for Bureauwide remote data entry implementation, i.e., RO, MO, RC, RV, and TO including the advance portion of the document and the TO clones TD and TF.

- Scan access to the PTS tables which these documents update as well as payment voucher related tables.

- Scan access to two budget execution tables which show cost target and spending data at two different levels (ALOC and BALT).

- Scan access to the Vendor Table (VEND) for employees who enter travel related documents and look-up access to the BLM custom zero table (VNDR) for employees who enter non-travel related documents. The VNDR table is the same as the VEND table but does not display sensitive data such as social security number or banking information.

- Scan access to project related tables (PROJ, SPRJ, FPRJ, FPCA, CAHT, CALT, IWPT, etc.). This will resolve a long-standing issue related to the currency of project information.

Training: During the pilot project, detailed training materials and procedures were developed, tested, and refined. These training materials and documented procedures will be used for Bureauwide implementation with ongoing maintenance, revision, expansion, and improvement as deemed appropriate by the SC and the states.

A minimum of two training sessions will be conducted in each state with an initial training session for remote data entry and a follow up session after field office employees have had an opportunity to perform remote data entry. The training will be evaluated by individuals attending the training sessions and modifications/ improvements made to the training based on the evaluation feedback.

To the extent resources are available, key personnel from the Idaho and Wyoming State Offices who have participated in the pilot project will provide assistance to the SC, Division of Finance in implementing remote data entry of financial transactions on a Bureauwide basis. This will include assisting the SC in both initial and follow-up training for other states. It will also include sharing information and providing assistance in the development and/or implementation of automated local analysis tools such as those currently used by the two pilot states to format down loaded financial data available from the SC.

Local Analysis Capability: The SC, Division of Finance will make available to the states a transaction detail file which will be updated on a daily basis in concert with the FFS nightly cycle. This file will reside on the Honeywell or other BLM platform. States will be given the opportunity to query this file or to download their state's financial data into software of their choice and utilize the data for management purposes as they deem appropriate.

State Specific Implementation: The respective State Directors will be delegated the responsibility for determining the remote data entry sites where financial transactions will be entered. Each state's Budget Office should be responsible for

statewide coordination of the implementation and subsequent oversight thereof. This decision is based on results of the pilot project where Idaho and Wyoming took different approaches to implementation, both of which were equally successful.

The SC Division of Finance will be responsible for field office training, system administration, and functional support. The SC Division of Computer Maintenance, Operation, and Support Services will be responsible for providing telecommunications technical support.

Implementation Strategy: Implementation of remote data entry of financial transactions on a Bureauwide basis is contingent upon resources availability in the SC, Division of Finance. Even though the benefits of this endeavor are considerable for the Bureau, very limited resources are available at this time. Therefore, a phased Bureauwide implementation beginning with Arizona and the Phoenix Training Center will begin in either January or February, 1994.

Once Arizona and the Training Center have been trained and SC assistance requirements to those organizations has been stabilized, additional state(s) will be phased in on approximate six month intervals.

Arizona and the Training Center were selected as the initial Bureauwide implementation states based on their interest in the project and their desire to be among the first to implement. During FY 1994, selection of other states would be made on the same basis.

Implementation during FY 1995 would be based on a predetermined schedule approved by the Assistant Director, Management Services.

Source Documents: Source documents will continue to be forwarded to the Division of Finance to ensure proper disposition and document referencing.

BLM plans to explore the ramifications of decentralized financial records in concert with its evaluation of expanded remote entry at some time in the future.

Reports: Two reports have been developed for field use in validating commitments. Similar obligation reports are already in production and the field has the responsibility for evaluating the validity of obligations on a recurring basis.

Internal Controls: Controls will be applied through the FFS security system. Security profiles, by organization, will restrict individual users to those transactions to which they

nationwide coordination of the implementation and subsequent oversight thereof. This decision is based on results of the pilot project where Idaho and Wyoming took different approaches to implementation, both of which were equally successful.

The SC Division of Finance will be responsible for field office training, system administration, and functional support. The SC Division of Computer Maintenance, Operation, and Support Services will be responsible for providing telecommunications technical support.

Implementation Strategy: Implementation of remote data entry of financial transactions on a nationwide basis is contingent upon resources availability in the SC, Division of Finance. Even though the benefits of this endeavor are considerable for the Bureau, very limited resources are available at this time. Therefore, a phased Bureauwide implementation beginning with Arizona and the Phoenix Training Center will begin in either January or February, 1994.

Once Arizona and the Training Center have been trained and SC assistance requirements to those organizations has been stabilized, additional state(s) will be phased in on approximate six month intervals.

Arizona and the Training Center were selected as the initial Bureauwide implementation states based on their interest in the project and their desire to be among the first to implement. During FY 1994, selection of other states would be made on the same basis.

Implementation during FY 1995 would be based on a predetermined schedule approved by the Assistant Director, Management Services.

Source Documents: Source documents will continue to be forwarded to the Division of Finance to ensure proper disposition and document referencing.

BLM plans to explore the ramifications of decentralized financial records in concert with its evaluation of expanded remote entry at some time in the future.

Reports: Two reports have been developed for field use in validating commitments. Similar obligation reports are already in production and the field has the responsibility for evaluating the validity of obligations on a recurring basis.

Internal Controls: Controls will be applied through the RFS security system. Security profiles, by organization, will restrict individual users to those transactions to which they

have specific authorization to process. The development and maintenance of FFS security will be accomplished by the Division of Finance Security Officer.

Controls will also be applied through edits, approvals, and processing limits available within the system as well as written procedures. Where substantive risks exist, additional procedures, reviews, and audit requirements have been established.

Processing Procedures for Field Entry Transactions

BLM field offices will have the authority to add, change (modify), and/or delete RQ, MO, RC, BV, TD, TF, and TO transactions for their organization only. These transactions will be processed on-line using the "W" in the action field. Normal system edits will be invoked for each of these transactions.

Delineation of Responsibilities

The following outline delineates field office and Division of Finance responsibilities relating to remote data entry implementation:

Field Offices	Division of Finance
- Request vendor table updates.	- Update vendor table.
- Enter and modify RQ documents from the BLM 1510-18 source document.	- Reference (liquidate) RQ documents if payments are made without a corresponding obligation or receiver.
- Reconcile outstanding commitments.	- Provide field offices with reports to facilitate validation of outstanding commitments.
- Enter and modify MO documents. Reference (liquidate) RQ documents as appropriate.	- Reference (liquidate) obligations when receivers are entered by the Service Center (SC) and/or when payments are made.
- Enter and modify RC documents. Reference (liquidate) MO documents as appropriate.	- Reference (liquidate) receivers when payments are made. Where the RC was not entered by the field office and the SC

have specific authorization to process. The development and maintenance of FSS security will be accomplished by the Division of Finance Security Officer.

Control will also be applied through edits, approvals, and processing limits available within the system as well as written procedures. Where substantive risks exist, additional procedures, reviews, and audit requirements have been established.

Processing Procedures for Field Entry Transactions

BLM field offices will have the authority to add, change (modify), and/or delete RO, MO, RC, BV, TD, TF, and TO transactions for their organization only. These transactions will be processed on-line using the "W" in the action field. Normal system edits will be invoked for each of these transactions.

Delineation of Responsibilities

The following outline delineates field office and Division of Finance responsibilities relating to remote data entry implementation:

Field Offices	Division of Finance
- Request vendor table updates.	- Update vendor table.
- Enter and modify RO documents from the BLM 1510-19 source document.	- Reference (liquidate) RO documents if payments are made without a corresponding obligation or receiver.
- Reconcile outstanding commitments.	- Provide field offices with reports to facilitate validation of outstanding commitments.
- Enter and modify MO documents. Reference (liquidate) RO documents as appropriate.	- Reference (liquidate) obligations when receivers are entered by the Service Center (SC) and/or when payments are made.
- Enter and modify RC documents. Reference (liquidate) MO documents as appropriate.	- Reference (liquidate) receivers when payments are made. Where the RC was not entered by the field office and the SC

Field Offices	Division of Finance
	is in possession of the receiving report, the SC will reference the MO and/or RQ as applicable.
- Enter and modify TO, TD, and TF documents.	- Reference the travel order (TF) and enter the travel advance (TD) document. Liquidate the obligation and outstanding advance when the travel voucher is paid as applicable.
	- Provide written procedures addressing adherence to established travel authorization policy and control of document flows.
	- Establish internal controls and audit (review) processes.
	- Incorporate review of travel advance processes into annual Technical Procedures Review (TPR) activities.
- Enter and approve BV documents equal to or less than $20,000.	- Enter BV documents greater than $20,000.
- Perform functions in accordance with training and guidance provided by the SC.	- Provide training to the field offices for the tasks to be performed. Training will include FFS document entry, and table research.
	- Provide retraining or general support as required.
- Perform functions in accordance with written procedures established for remote entry.	- Provide detailed written procedures for remote data entry transactions and processes.

Field Offices

- Work with SC-340 and the Denver Administrative Service Center to implement necessary telecommunications and resolve issues associated therewith.

Division of Finance

- Provide telecommunications assistance and support.

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Denver, CO 80225